

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Masakazu Shimoda, 68, retired store manager, Kahului

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Masakazu Shimoda, Japanese, was born December 9, 1911, in Camp 6, Puunene, Maui. His father, Hanjiro Shimoda, founded Maui Shōkai, one of the Kahului "big 5" Japanese stores which served the Paia and Puunene camps. Although a Japanese-owned store, Maui Shōkai catered primarily to Filipinos. When Shimoda was nine years old, his family moved to Kahului and lived in a house behind the store.

In 1928 Shimoda attended St. Louis High School in Honolulu. Later, he attended Waseda University in Japan, taking business courses. In 1940, when his father moved back to Japan, Shimoda took over as assistant manager of Maui Shōkai. Subsequently, he and his two brothers took over store operations.

In the 1950s, Maui Shōkai moved from Kahului and occupied two buildings that once housed the Camp 5 Store and Haliimaile Store. In 1973, Maui Shōkai finally closed its doors, the last of the "big 5" to do so.

Shimoda presently lives in Wailuku with his wife, Florence. He golfs daily.

Tape No. 7-9-1-79
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Masakazu Shimoda (MS)

November 7, 1979

Wailuku, Maui

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Masakazu Shimoda. Today is November 7, 1979, and we're at his home in Wailuku, Maui.

Okay, Mr. Shimoda, can we start by having you tell us where you were born and when you were born?

MS: I was born in Puunene. December 9, 1911.

WN: What part of Puunene were you born?

MS: Camp 6. Village 6.

WN: Camp 6. About where was that?

MS: That was near that During the war, they made (it an) airport. What kind airport was that? I think was Navy, but it's now back to sugar cane again. That's about five miles away from the Puunene Camp.

WN: Camp 6 was five miles away from Puunene Camp?

MS: Yeah, about five miles away from that sugar mill.

WN: And how many people, you think, lived in Camp 6?

MS: Oh, those days, maybe about 100. Was pretty big camp--plantation camp.

WN: Was it mostly Japanese or . . .

MS: Those days, mostly Japanese. The Filipinos came in afterwards. About (twenty) years ago, I think the camp was gone already. When the war [World War II] started?

WN: Nineteen forty-one [1941]?

MS: Yeah. Oh, that's twenty-five years ago already, the camp.

WN: Oh, the camp broke up in 1941?

MS: Yeah, around there. They moved the camp, temporary, to another (site) about two miles away from the airport. Right now, there's no camp already. Even the temporary one.

WN: By "temporary," you mean what?

MS: They made additional homes alongside of the road. You know, away from the airport. Then those days already, mostly Filipinos.

WN: So, when they decided to build the airport, did they move the people living in the camp?

MS: Yeah. That's right. To that new site. But then already, mostly Filipinos were left. Not too many Japanese already because they were moving away from that village. Eventually plantation was going to close that plantation village anyway--Camp 6.

WN: Can you tell me something about your father and mother?

MS: My father and mother, they came from Japan. My father worked at the camp plantation store.

WN: Oh, which plantation store was this?

MS: They call that Camp 5. He worked until he started that store of his own [Maui Shōkai], about 1919 or 1920. Then it was a corporation.

WN: Do you remember how long your father worked at the Camp 5 Store?

MS: Not too long. Maybe about three, four years. Those days, they were using the buggy. No cars, those days, yet. I know he was going to camp, take orders maybe. See, he used to deliver on the buggy. Then, went into his own.

WN: I see. Your father came to Hawaii in about 1906?

MS: Around there, I think, because I was born 1911. (Laughs) Maybe 1900, yeah? Because I have older brother and older sisters, yet. My oldest brother is about seventy-five, so 1900 then.

WN: Nineteen hundred [1900]. Do you know what kind of job he had before he started working in the Camp 5 Store?

MS: Oh, plantation. In the cane field. He said he was hāpai kō. You know what that mean? Carry sugar cane on their back. He did that, he was telling me.

My mother ran something like a kindergarten. Those days, they call that I don't think they call it kindergarten. She was taking care the working people children. Plantation gave 'em a

little yard where she kept about fifteen children. That's just like her job then. Then she was cooking for the single boys, too. So, we had a pretty big house.

WN: Did your mother get paid for this work in the kindergarten?

MS: No. That's individually. So, the individual parents pay her, maybe, five dollars a month. And then, she cook for them, maybe she charge ten dollars a month. Those days was dollar a day, your living wage [for plantation work], you know.

I know my father used to tell me they made about twenty-six dollars a month. They were in twenty-five dollar tanomoshi. (Chuckles) Naturally, my mother doing the side business, so they could keep it up. You know what tanomoshi mean, eh? (Chuckles)

WN: Yeah. Did your father start the tanomoshi?

MS: That I don't know.

WN: Was he organizing it?

MS: No, I don't think so. (Laughs) I don't know about that, but he just told me he was in twenty-five dollar tanomoshi, and he made about twenty-seven dollars a month [wages]. (Laughs)

WN: So, your father and your mother were both working?

MS: Well, if you call that working. She was making little bit money. If not, you can't make a go, paying twenty-five dollar tanomoshi with twenty-seven dollars income.

WN: Do you remember how much your father made through the tanomoshi?

MS: I don't know. (Laughs) They used to get big interest, you know. But many of them would go broke. In the end they can't pay. Oh, those days, lot of tanomoshi around. Everybody was making tanomoshi because they needed the money right away. And they pay back monthly, with interest, of course. But many went broke.

WN: Because why? People wouldn't pay their . . .

MS: Yeah. In the end, the leftover--the people who didn't take [their turn at receiving the full amount]--can't get their money back. Because some of them refused to pay in. Right now, no more tanomoshi already. (Laughs) Those days are gone.

WN: Did your father do anything else besides hāpai kō?

MS: Maybe cut grass, I don't know. Oh, but he told me those days was tough. Even if you get sick, the lunas would come and take you out in the field. Make you work. You see, you have to be sick, can't move, then you (were) allowed to stay home. Otherwise, they chase

you out in the field. Those days, he said, was dusty, dusty, dusty because trees (were) not grown yet. Not like nowadays. Before it was all barren, that's why. Oh, everything was dusty. Lot of single men. Oh, those days was tough, he said. (Laughs)

WN: Your father came straight to Puunene from Japan?

MS: Yeah. Puunene.

WN: Then you said he moved over to Camp 5 Store. Did he ever tell you how he got the job?

MS: No, he didn't tell me how. But I know those were the buggy days.

WN: Did he tell about what it was like to deliver on the buggy?

MS: No, you just have to imagine how slow those buggy days were. But pay being small, naturally everything was slow.

WN: When you were growing up in Camp 6, Puunene, what kind of things did you used to do as a boy?

MS: Not much. No baseball, I know. No football. Nothing I can remember until we moved away. When I was in first grade, they had Puunene School. So, I think by third grade, we moved to Kahului. That's when my father started the store in Kahului. Then we started in the school activities. Have football. I mean, not football but baseball. Volleyball, track. We used to walk from Camp 6. That's about five miles. Those days no car.

WN: You used to walk to

MS: School. Yeah.

WN: Puunene School?

MS: Yeah, Puunene School. Otherwise, we had to wait for the train--the train that took the labor back and forth. If the train came early, then we used to ride on the train. When the train is late, then we had to walk. So, [we were] undecided what day the train is coming. All depending. If they come early, we take a ride.

WN: It wouldn't come same time every day?

MS: No, no, no. Not scheduled train. Just happen when we are walking and we see the train, well, we catch a ride.

WN: Did the train stop right near your house?

MS: Oh, near the camp, anyway. It's alongside of the road, so naturally, we can see.

WN: Did you have to pay at all to get on the train?

MS: No, no, no. (Laughs) Nothing. And those days, the saimin was ten cents. (Laughs) Ten cents a big bowl.

WN: Where did you used to go to have your saimin?

MS: That, they used to call Hamada Restaurant [now Sam Sato Store], I think. And then, had one Chinese Restaurant, too, right near.

WN: This was all in Camp 6 or in . . .

MS: No. Camp 5. Camp 5, they call that. Camp 6 had one small store. Just handle few things, that's all.

WN: Your mother, how did she get her groceries, living in Camp 6?

MS: Through Camp 5--Camp 5 [Plantation] Store. They used to deliver on the buggy, as I told you. She used to buy quite a lot because she used to cook for the single men. That's why we had a pretty big house.

WN: The single men would go over to your house to eat?

MS: Yeah, in the evening. Morning, she has that lunch can all ready. They pick up the lunch can and go to work.

WN: Oh, she feed 'em lunch, too?

MS: Out in the field they have to take lunch pail. So, she get the lunch pail all ready. She doesn't feed 'em at home. They all have to go in the field and eat their lunch. Breakfast, she feed 'em early in the morning. Those days was about 4:30 [a.m.] that you eat breakfast.

WN: Now, how many men is this for?

MS: I think she had only about ten. Five to ten. Not too many. That's the side money she was making. And then, keep children on the side.

WN: Would she feed the children, too?

MS: I think so. You have to feed 'em, lunchtime, yeah? (Laughs)

WN: Did other women in that camp do that?

MS: No. No more. I know only my mother was doing that. She didn't have education, so that's the only thing she can do--manual labor. She cannot read or write, but as far as memory, we can't beat 'em. Terrific memory. Wow. The store combination--you know, the safe--go right, left. She cannot read the figures, but she can open. For us, we had to memorize. If not, we can't. (Laughs)

I know one time, we went My first trip to Japan. Tokyo

Eki, that's Tokyo Station. There's so many way of going out. One going to Hokkaido, one Nikko, one going to Fukuoka, one Kumamoto. She tell you what platform [to board the train on]. We have to look the words--if [you want to go to] Kumamoto, [then you look for the sign saying], "Kumamoto." She take us down, put us on the platform. That's the station it's going. The train leaving. Terrific memory. (Laughs)

WN: She couldn't read Japanese either?

MS: She cannot read anything. Not a single word. We live in Kumamoto, see? We have to look the map. Hey, this [train] is now coming to Kumamoto.

Just by looking outside [the train], she tells, "Hey, everybody get ready. Next station, we getting off." That good, you know. I don't know what she has--insight--but she remembers. She cannot read; next station is Kumamoto. (Laughs)

WN: I was wondering why you think that your mother was the only woman in the Camp 6 to do the cooking and kindergarten? What were the other women doing?

MS: Most of them work too, yeah? Those days. Go out in the field.

WN: Did your mother do laundry, also?

MS: I think she did. Yeah, come to think of it, she did, though. And on the side, she was raising pigs, too. She was a hard worker. That's why she was short. (Laughs) Cannot grow tall.

WN: Your father and mother were married in Japan?

MS: Japan, yeah.

WN: So they came here together?

MS: Uh huh [yes]. The old people, those days, they just wanted to make so much money and go back to Japan. I don't know about your father, but most Japanese. It's not like Chinese or Portuguese. They came here to stay. But you take Filipino, Japanese, they make money; they want to go back. Our parents had the same idea. They said they wanted to die in Japan.

WN: Did he tell you this?

MS: Oh, yeah. They always say they wanted to die in Japan. Naturally, they all died in Japan. (Laughs) They had their wish. That's why they didn't buy any land here. Everything, they sent to Japan.

Those days, [one] dollar was twenty yen. Twenty to one. Not like now--three hundred [yen] to one [dollar]. Hard-earned money, they

used to send to Japan. And the war came, and all was wiped out. But their idea was to go back to Japan, so naturally, they sent all the money to Japan. If they had the idea like Portuguese--buy the land, buy the land--oh, today no need to worry. Japanese would have owned plenty place over here, I think. I think majority Maybe your parents had the same idea. Oh, maybe yours is second generation already.

WN: Mine is second generation.

MS: Yeah, they don't have the Your father's parents, I think. Grandparents. Few Japanese actually own the big land here. The idea was to go back to Japan, so naturally, they didn't invest here.

WN: But your father started a store later on. Did he start the store with the idea of making a lot of money and going back to Japan?

MS: [That was] his idea, and then, leave the store for us. His idea was always leave the store for us. The three brothers work together. So, my older brother and myself. My younger brother went to [work in] the bank.

WN: Which bank?

MS: First Hawaiian Bank. That's the one you met, I think. He was manager, before he retired, [of the] Wailuku branch. Then my older brother and myself, we took over after my father turned the business over to us. Three brothers partnership, but only two worked in the store. The younger brother came in after work [in the bank] to take care the book.

WN: Bookkeeper?

MS: Bookkeeper.

WN: So, this was about wartime, then, when you and your brothers took over?

MS: Just before war.

WN: Oh, just before the war? Nineteen forty [1940]?

MS: I think, around there because I still remember when the war broke out, they took my brother in. In the intern camp. Because he was teaching kendō.

WN: Where was he teaching?

MS: In Maui. Because he went back to Japan when he was young. He learned, I think, little bit of kendō, and he came back. Then, as soon as the war broke out--I think day after--they picked him up.

And I was a provincial police. When the war broke out, they had that provincial police. Volunteers. But we were training anyway. Next day they picked him up, so I had to quit from the provincial police.

WN: How were your trained for that?

MS: Oh, we just . . . with the stick. (Laughs) Now, what they call that?

WN: Billy club?

MS: Yeah, billy club. That's all we had. (Laughs) And we were trained in what to do in case of emergency. That's all. When the submarine bombed Kahului, we had the railroad truck all ready to take the people away. But we didn't go far. We went only about not even one mile away from the Kahului [Railroad Company] Camp.

(Laughs) Those days, everybody (made bomb shelter). Dug out that You know, to hide in. Everybody had near their house, but Kahului didn't. [Because it's] sea level, you dig two feet, you get water coming in. (Laughs) So you have to go above the ground. In case the bomb fell down, you're gone anyway. When you are high, you cannot protect anything.

WN: You said your brother had to go to the internment camp?

MS: Yeah, internment camp.

WN: The reason they gave was because he was a kendō teacher?

MS: They didn't say anything. They just pick 'em up. But that must be the case. No other reason.

WN: So, why weren't you interned?

MS: Ah, I had friends in that office. He was good to me.

WN: How did you know him, or how did you know the people?

MS: The head of that military office was a former Maui News editor. He was baseball coach at Punahou. That's how I knew him, see? When I was playing baseball for St. Louis. So, he knew my background, so he gave me a break. Because I was educated in Japan, you know. That's all, only [for] education. But one in the family [interned is] enough.

WN: You said your father's idea was to work hard, go back to Japan, and have you and your brothers eventually take over?

MS: Yeah, take over. Well, that's all. We took over anyway.

WN: How did he tell this to you folks? When you were growing up, did

he just say, "You're going to take over"?

MS: No, when I was in high school already, he said, "The business for you three." So, we divided up. Left the sisters out. Japanese style, the girls get nothing. (Laughs) The older brother had bigger share, I had next, and then, the younger one had equal share with me.

WN: You went to high school in Honolulu. Why did you go to Honolulu for high school?

MS: My father had a friend. He was Mr. Spencer, they call. He was the head of the truck department. He ran for mayor, too. Influential, yeah? So, (while I was in) grammar school, I was playing practically every sport and pretty good. He's a strong St. Louis [High School] man.

He tell my father, "Send your boy to St. Louis."

I had nothing to say, so they took me there. St. Louis, those days, had only, I think, ten Japanese [students]. Out of place, but I stuck it out. I was supposed to go to Lahainaluna.

WN: St. Louis supposed to be better?

MS: As far as commercial. Commercial courses, they were the best during those days. They had more office equipment. Those days, they didn't have those Honolulu Business College. And they were specializing in commercial. I think (St. Louis was the) only school that had typewriters, adding machines, all those commercial things. Public school didn't have in those days. So, naturally, my father wanted me to learn bookkeeping, office equipment. To go back into the store.

But after [graduating from] St. Louis, I left for Japan because I was working for First Federal Building Loan--Savings and Loan. They hired me because they wanted me to speak Japanese. But in those days, we didn't go to Japanese school. They wanted me to talk to the old Japanese ladies about interest rates, savings. (I couldn't speak Japanese, so) within two year, I said, "I better go to Japan, learn little Japanese."

WN: You graduated from St. Louis in nineteen . . .

MS: Thirty-two [1932].

WN: And then, you worked for First Federal?

MS: Two years. Then I went to Japan--Waseda.

WN: Waseda University?

MS: Yeah, then I finished in three years. They call that specialized--senmonbu.

WN: How did you decide to go to Waseda?

MS: Somebody told me Waseda is a good school. So, I went. They say it's better than Meiji. Meiji is for the rougher people. They say Imperial--Teidai--is first. That's the best in Japan. Next is Keio. Then came Waseda. The ones who cannot get into Keio would come into Waseda. Ones rejected by Waseda would go to Meiji or Rikkyo. But I got in. Maybe be from Hawaii, they gave us a break. I took commercial there, too. (I had an uncle who went to Waseda. It is known in Japan for business school.)

WN: Were there other people from Hawaii in Waseda?

MS: Yeah, had one, I know, two. There was [Takeshi] Yokono. I don't know if you know him. Waipahu.

WN: He's from Waipahu? Oh, and he has the Big Way Supermarket?

MS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. He was [at Waseda] same time with me, but his father died, so he came back. He didn't finish Waseda. But luckily he came back [to Hawaii] early. He made a big killing in the real estate there [Oahu].

WN: What did your father think about Waseda?

MS: He didn't say anything. That, I don't know anything about what he said.

WN: Did he pay for your education over there?

MS: Oh yeah. He paid for me. In fact, my brother--in other words--sent the money. He was running the store with my father. Then, after finishing, they told me to come back, so I came back to run the store with my brother. He was the manager. I was the assistant. (Chuckles)

WN: Let's go back little bit to when your father first started the store. What can you tell me? What can you remember about your father setting up the business?

MS: Gee, I don't know how he set it up. Only thing I know, we had any kind of grocery you mention.

WN: You said that your father joined into a corporation?

MS: Yeah, yeah. That's how they started--the beginning. Then I think, [there was] little dissension. So, he bought out the other shares.

WN: What was the name of the place before?

MS: Higo Shōkai. Then came Maui Shōkai. "Shōkai" is meeting place,

eh? I don't know what's the meaning of "higo." Sunrise, I think.

WN: That was somebody's name?

MS: No, just took Higo. Maybe "hinomaru," eh? Round. Hinomaru.

WN: Rising sun?

MS: Yeah, rising sun. Higo, I think. By himself [MS's father], then he had few Japanese salesmen [working under him]. Eventually, he turned to Filipino when the Filipinos started to come in because we had too many Japanese stores--competitive. My father was the first to trust Filipino. Give credit.

WN: Do you know about when that was?

MS: When the Filipinos came in? (Laughs) Maybe couple after . . .

WN: Nineteen eight [1908], they started.

MS: Filipinos? No. That's maybe Japanese were coming in then, yet. So, Filipinos didn't come yet.

WN: Nineteen twenty-four [1924]?

MS: Yeah, around there, Filipinos actually came in. Yeah. So, after that. See, we had Nihonjin Shōkai [Japanese Mercantile], Onishi Shōkai, and we had Kobayashi, Ikeda, and then, Paia Mercantile. Paia Nihonjin Shōkai, they used to call. That's five there. With us, makes six. Lot of competition.

WN: Five of you were all in . . .

MS: In Kahului [with the exception of Paia Mercantile].

WN: You all sold the same type of merchandise?

MS: Yeah, only we sold bicycles. That, nobody sold. Then we sold RCA phonograph, which nobody sold. I think that's the only difference, though.

Then, we went into the Filipino business. We had a good Filipino salesman. We had, say, about five Filipino salesmen. Especially, like more in Filipino, we gave up Japanese. [We] only [had] few handful of Japanese customers.

WN: Why did you give up the Japanese?

MS: Too many stores to one family. You take five stores maybe going to the same customers, you can't get too much business out of that. Whereas, Filipinos, you get the whole Filipinos by yourself. We had for quite a long time, you know, only by ourself. Then the

people saw how much business we were doing in Filipino, the others came in. But we had the cream of the crop.

Then, the Filipinos, instead of going to the bank, they trusted my father more than the bank. They started to put their savings. That was the big difference.

WN: What did your father do to get the trust of the Filipinos?

MS: We had a good Filipino salesman. He's the one. Not my father. The salesman. Oh, he would go out early and stay till late.

WN: He would go out to the . . .

MS: Camps. Take order, then next day, deliver. And collection time--payday--he would go out before they go to work. Four thirty [4:30] in the morning, he go out collecting because some, you cannot see [during the day]. Then, daytime, he would deliver. After work, he still go to collect. Hey, that Filipino was terrific.

WN: How often was collection time?

MS: Once a month. Once a month payday. Those days plantation (also) had--what you call--"kompang money." I don't know if you know what's kompang money.

WN: Yeah, I know.

MS: That's, you know, they take care of the field.

WN: Every two years?

MS: Yeah, they take care the field by themself. Then, after harvest, if you had good tonnage, you make good money. Those people, we had to carry [i.e., give credit]. I know some of them, we carried for about nine, eight hundred dollars [\$900-\$800] those days.

WN: In two years' time, while they were waiting for their cane to be harvested . . .

MS: Pay, yeah. Then, we collected our money.

WN: So, sometimes their bill would be \$800?

MS: Oh, yeah. I remember, \$800. Those days, I used to go out already. Even though I was small, I used to go out with the salesman. He used to take me out, see?

WN: Oh, I see. About how old were you?

MS: Oh, I was in grammar school, yet. So, about fifteen years old, I think.

WN: You used to go out with the salesman?

MS: Yeah, with him. That's why I got up 4:30 in the morning, go collect. Because not everyone There's some out of that bunch--maybe one or two--that don't want to see you. They stay away, yeah? So, you go in the morning to catch them. (Laughs)

WN: Oh, before they wake up?

MS: Yeah. (Laughs) Before they start to work. The salesman wake 'em up. But he was so light, they don't get mad with him. Then, some of them would come to the store, pay. That's all right.

Then eventually, they [Filipinos] trusted our store so much, they put their life savings with us. Every payday, put savings. So, we were just like the bank--passbook. Keep their accounting. That's why we could carry those [kompany] people for two years to pay us. If not, we cannot carry. We had that extra cash to carry them along. You try get, maybe, fifty people waiting for kompany money. You can't pay the wholesaler in the end.

WN: Did the other stores, like Ikeda and Kobayashi, do that kind of thing, too?

MS: Save money? You mean, people save? No, the Japanese didn't have those savings accounts. They would go to the bank. The newcomers, Filipinos, they were saying Maui Shōkai safer than the bank. (Laughs)

WN: What bank did they have in those days?

MS: Baldwin Bank. They'd call Baldwin Bank. (Then changed to) First Hawaiian Bank.

WN: Would you give them [the Filipinos] interest at all?

MS: I think so. My father must have given interest, though. You using their money. Until they made that banking law that we cannot handle. Then, we had to pay back everybody.

WN: Do you remember when that was?

MS: Gee, I don't know. Quite long already.

WN: Was that before you started [in 1940]?

MS: Oh yeah. Before I started. I think we were doing too much business--banking business. (Chuckles) My father said we had quite a sum of that Filipino money saved. But he said not one they fail to pay back. He boasted, he said, "We paid everybody every cent."

WN: Did you have kompany people not pay you?

MS: No. Most of them pay. Kompany people, they about the most trustworthy because, after all, you are carrying them for almost two years. Of course, if they short of income, then you have to carry them for another two years.

WN: You know, this salesman that you were telling me about, what was his name?

MS: Solinap. First name was Forencio--Solinap. Visayan. (Laughs) You know, between the Visayan and Ilocano, Visayan is the sporty type. Flashy, flashy. All on their clothing, they use. Ilocano is conservative type. Hard worker. They try to keep money all the time. So, they don't dress up. So, you can tell Filipino, those days--Visayan and Ilocano. Our salesman was Visayan, so he's all flashy. With cigar. Oh, he was terrific, I tell you.

WN: What kind of things would he wear?

MS: Silk shirt. Those days, had silk. All the time, silk shirt. And with couple cigars in his pocket and in the car, [he] always [had a] box full of cigars. He passed around to all those big shot like policeman or something. [Whenever] he need favor, he always pass 'em around. (Chuckles) That's why he's a good salesman. He know how to play ball, eh? He made our store. I tell you, he made our store.

WN: Do you know what he did before he started working for your father?

MS: No, must be plantation, yeah? I don't know how my father got him, though, but he was really good.

WN: When you were young and you went out with him, what kind of things would he tell the residents?

MS: He used to always joke with them. Take order. He's good. I used to deliver goods with him. Then, payday, I go collection with him. He never scold the people. He always praise 'em, so naturally, they like him. Never get mad. That's one thing about him.

WN: When your father started the store, this Solinap, did he start right about that time, too?

MS: No. Afterwards. About five, ten years after. After the Filipinos came in, and then, couple years after. As soon as Filipinos came in, nobody trusted them yet, eh? So, it took, I think, couple years after.

But if it wasn't for Filipinos, I think maybe Maui Shōkai gone already [i.e., would have gone out of business earlier]. Too much competition. Because [for such items as] phonograph, they get those specialty stores. Then, bicycle shop would come. Ours was all general. We didn't specialize. We weren't wide awake enough to go

specialty store. Everything under the sun, we were selling.

WN: Where did your father get most of the goods from?

MS: Most [came from] Sumida. Sumida [and] Hata.

WN: These are all Honolulu firms, huh?

MS: Yeah, Honolulu firms. [There also were] Maui firms. A&B [Alexander & Baldwin] Kahului Store, they used to call. We used to get from them, but not too much. And Maui Dry Goods. That's the two wholesalers they had.

WN: Why did you go to Honolulu wholesalers?

MS: Cheaper, cheaper. Honolulu cheaper. And then, T.H. Davies. American Factors. They were all grocery wholesalers.

WN: Why was it cheaper?

MS: I think they had the volume, yeah? And then, Kahului Store, they had to give five percent or ten percent to A&B of Honolulu. Whatever they buy, they have to buy through A&B, see? Not direct to the Mainland. So, already, right off the bat, your markup is different. Like AmFac [American Factors] would buy from, maybe, the manufacturer. Direct. Those days, they used to send salesman every month.

WN: To . . .

MS: Maui. Yeah. Take order. They combine the order and make direct shipment.

WN: When the plantation store was ordering from A&B Kahului [Store], were their prices lower? Did they give the plantation stores better deal?

MS: I think the cost would be about the same but because they had to pay the commission to A&B Honolulu. They cannot give 'em at cost. They have to charge little extra because they have to mark up for their wholesale department. So, the plantation store, the price was about even with us [Maui Shōkai].

WN: How much cheaper was it to order from a Honolulu firm?

MS: Ah, maybe about ten percent, yeah?

WN: Ten percent less?

MS: Yeah. And then, Kahului Store would take the orders from each store. They combine and make direct shipment. Then it's cheaper. [Merchandise] doesn't have to stay at Kahului Store warehouse.

They have what they call direct shipment from Mainland. They take the order and then send 'em [the order] to the manufacturer.

WN: Do you know when they started doing that?

MS: Oh, quite a long time. At the beginning, not, though. But when they [merchants] see the price differential between Kahului and Honolulu, they started to take that direct shipment order to compete with them [Kahului Store]. But then, they cannot get every firm. So, the bulk of the business was with American Factors and Davies-- T.H. Davies.

But we used to buy, lot of time, from the Mainland. Direct wholesaler. When our time came [after 1940]. Like my father's time, he cannot write, so naturally, [his orders came] all through these salesmen.

WN: Oh, your father couldn't write English?

MS: He cannot write English.

WN: He could not deal with the Mainland firms?

MS: Mainland firms, yeah. When our time [came], then we started dealing with United Grocers in the Mainland.

WN: When you started just before the war in 1940, that was when . . .

MS: After we started running for maybe couple years, then we started to look for cheaper place, so we got the connection in the Mainland.

WN: How much cheaper do you think it was dealing with a Mainland firm as opposed to, say, AmFac?

MS: Oh, about ten percent. Ten percent cheaper.

WN: Was your father aware of this? That he could have ordered from the Mainland?

MS: No, he doesn't know. I think he went away to Japan already. Just before the war broke out. I think he left here maybe the second to the last boat to Japan before the war broke out.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MS: . . . He [Forencio Solinap] worked as though [Maui Shōkai was] his own store. Time is nothing to him. And worked early in the morning, like 4:30, I told you; he can work till late.

Those days was steamer days. No more airplane. To go to Honolulu, you have to ride the steamer. They used to leave about 8 o'clock in the evening. He (will) go to the dock. Wait right at the entrance of the steamer watching if anybody (will) go without paying. (Laughs)

You know, Filipinos are all single boys those days. Had few married people, so they can move here and there. So, he [Solina] goes every steamer night, wait at the dock to see if anybody (will) go away without paying. Usually they leave after payday, see? So, he be there the first steamer night after payday.

We used to make [prepare] all the accounts. He carry one sheet of paper, go to the dock, wait for the people. He see the guy, hey, one of his customers, he make 'em pay before they board the boat. You can't stop 'em by right, but those days, everybody ignorant about the law. (Laughs) They pay. (Laughs)

WN: How often would the steamer leave for Honolulu?

MS: Twice a week. Twice a week, those days.

WN: At night?

MS: At night. Eight or 9 o'clock [p.m.].

WN: So, twice a week, two nights a week, he would go there [the dock]?

MS: He go there, yeah. I know couple times, (when the) boat touched Lahaina. [It traveled] from Honolulu to Lahaina to Hilo, see? [He would] go over to Lahaina. As he goes in the camp, he would hear maybe [a certain] person might leave. So, he goes down to the [Lahaina] harbor 1 o'clock in the morning to wait for him. That's the kind guy he was. Go down there, watch.

WN: Did your father pay [him] any kind of commission? Did he get any commission for . . .

MS: No, I think he used to pay \$100 a month, though. Those days, was big. He was the highest-paid salesman. Even the other Japanese stores, they cannot compare what he was getting. He had, of course, free lodging and free meal.

WN: Where did he stay?

MS: Back of the store. Back of the store, we had all our residence and our kitchen. My mother was the cook. She was used to cooking for ten, fifteen people. Cook for (all our salesmen).

WN: Oh, this is in Kahului?

MS: Kahului.

WN: You would have about six salesmen?

MS: I think we had about six salesmen, yeah.

WN: How many were Filipino?

MS: Five. I think about five. Only one Japanese salesman we had. He just died about two years ago. He was our bicycle man--repairman. Same time, he will go out in the camp after repair.

WN: Did you just go with this Mr. Solinap when you were a boy?

MS: Yeah, just to hang around. Doing nothing. And they want me to help him because he used to take big orders. We had a pickup truck. Ford pickup. Each salesman has their own pickup truck. They assigned one car (to each).

WN: So, your father owned six pickup trucks, then?

MS: Yeah, about that. For each salesman, one. We had one big truck to haul freight. Those days, they didn't have those transportation company--the cargo-handling companies. We used to go down to the dock and pick up our own freight. That can hold about 100 bags of rice. When our rice come in, all the salesman go. Load 'em up, unload. That's in the beginning. Afterwards, why, they had those individual trucking companies. They would haul, but before, we all did our own hauling.

WN: Do you remember when the individual trucking companies started coming in?

MS: After we started, maybe ten years after.

WN: After your father started?

MS: No, no.

WN: After you started?

MS: Yeah, after we started.

WN: Oh, so, pretty recent, then [after 1940]?

MS: Yeah, not too long, the Valley Isle Trucking Company. And Sniffen, they had. Spencer. Three, besides [Kahului] railroad. But railroad went into hauling only sugar after the independents came in. Naturally, all us small guys would give [our business] to the independent.

WN: Because why?

MS: I wonder why? (Laughs) One side is big company [Kahului Railroad

Company, owned by Alexander and Baldwin], one side is small. Naturally, we try to give to the smaller one. So, eventually, they [the railroad] gave up the hauling. They went only to the hauling sugar.

WN: The salesmen would go out to take orders to the camps. Now, would they go to all the Puunene camps?

MS: Oh, they had Camp 1, Camp 2, we used to go. Three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen. Thirteen camps. They had up to Camp 13. [Each] salesman get certain district to go.

WN: Thirteen. How about Kihei? Did you go down there?

MS: No, Kihei didn't have any Filipinos. Kihei, only kiawe patch, those days, yet. No more plantation people. All the camps, that's the plantation homes, so our salesmen had certain district. That was [far] away from the store, Camp 13 is. Camp 12 is way [far] away.

WN: So, Solinap would have one section to cover, and . . .

MS: And another Filipino, another. Another one go another. So many camps. They go alternate. One salesman have about four camps. They go one camp, one day. Next day, one camp. The smaller camp, they cover two, maybe one day.

WN: Before the war, before you took over, about how many people or how many houses would one salesman deal with?

MS: Gee, how many About fifty houses, I think. No, about twenty-five, one afternoon.

WN: Twenty-five a day?

MS: Yeah, twenty-five a day. If they have less than that, they go another camp yet. Like Camp 5, that's a big place. Maybe over 100. They stay, maybe, one, two days [i.e., it may take more than one day to cover all of Camp 5].

WN: How often would they go to the same house?

MS: I think twice a week about at the most.

WN: How did your father coordinate all that? I mean, did he have a map of the camps or anything like that? And say, "You go, you take this--" . . .

MS: No, I know the salesmen divided themselves. They know which one they have to go. One go this certain camp. That's all he does. That camp. [For] life---till he quit.

Besides the Camp 13, we used to go to that Paia Store [Maui

Agricultural Company] district, too, see? Pulehu, Keahua, and Kaheka. If we get our salesmen, they'll get [orders] from that big camp. Like Pulehu used to be big camp. Our salesman would be from that camp. So naturally, he go to that camp. Everybody know him, so he get more order that way.

WN: That's how your father hired the salesman?

MS: Most times, they hired that way. From the camp. That's a good idea anyway. The people know you already, yeah?

WN: The salesman would go to each area twice a week?

MS: Around twice a week.

WN: That would be to take orders?

MS: Uh huh [yes]. They write the order; next morning, they start making the order. Afternoon, they put it on the truck, go out delivery.

WN: The salesmen would go?

MS: Yeah. After he deliver that certain camp, he finished, then he go to the next camp to take the order. He won't stay at that camp already. He finishes his delivery just before pau hana, then he goes to the next camp, take the order. Come home, write the order. Next morning, make the order. Afternoon, delivery, repeat again.

WN: Did each salesman have any help at all in delivering?

MS: No, no. Only Solinap, I used to help. What they call "new month." You know about new month?

WN: New month order?

MS: Yeah. They start, maybe, around the twentieth of the month. That, they don't bill you till the following month, see? So, they all [the stores] get new month order. That's when everybody buy plenty because they don't have to pay (until the following) payday.

WN: So, from the twentieth on, you . . .

MS: You had big order. Yeah, big order. Maybe two trip you have to make. Of course, if you have ten bag rice on your pickup truck, that's all you can put. Ten bag plus the groceries, see? So, you have to come back and make another trip. And Filipinos used to eat plenty of rice, so new month, that's when you sell your biggest quantity of rice.

WN: When you said "new month," if you get something on the nineteenth, you got to pay by the . . .

MS: By the end of the month, yeah.

WN: But if you get something on the twentieth . . .

MS: Twentieth, then you don't pay that payday, but the following payday. So, they all wait. (Chuckles) Nowadays, they don't have that system. More cash and carry. But those days, new month, they all wait. Even the wholesaler used to do that. Same way. So, I used to help deliver.

WN: When the salesman would come back to the store to fill out the order, how would he know what house to drop a certain item off?

MS: When he goes to take order, well, [for example], he go to your house. "Nishimoto" he put down on the bill--house number, what camp. And then, he start taking the order. On the bill, you have "Alabama Camp, house thirteen." You go deliver over there.

But when you deliver, you don't have him sign the receipt. That's the honesty system because [usually] they are not home yet. So, you just leave 'em on the porch. But those days, they don't steal like now. (Laughs) Maybe now, you cannot leave like that. Way back, you can just leave. If not, you never get your work done. Because if you wait for pau hana when they come home and make them sign the receipt that you got the grocery, you never can finish. But no, you go there, maybe, 2 o'clock, leave the things there and go deliver every house. But we had no trouble, though, stealing. Guy saying, "I didn't receive the goods." No more such thing.

Of course, once in a while We go with bangō. You know, plantation had bangō, not name. They assign you, maybe, 711. We might put 712 [by mistake], so we charge to the 712.

They say, "Hey, I didn't buy this."

Then we go back and ask the 711, they say, "Yeah, I bought certain thing."

WN: Oh, you charged by bangō, not by name?

MS: Bangō, not by name. Japanese, yeah, by Japanese [name]. But Filipino, we used to go by bangō.

WN: Why did you do it for . . .

MS: I don't know. Maybe it's more simple. All bangō, those days.

WN: So, it wasn't just the plantation [stores] that went by bangō?

MS: No. They prefer to buy from us than the plantation store because plantation store was payroll deduction [i.e., deducting what one owes the plantation from one's pay]. See, they [customers] don't see

the cash, so, I don't know, they don't feel too good, I think. At least with us, they see the cash [at payday], and then they pay us. (Laughs) [It's] the same thing in the end, but they prefer to see the cash, I think. Because then, in case they are short, they can tell, "Wait till next month." Whereas with plantation, they cannot do that. Never mind how hard a hardship you have. They deduct everything. That's why, I think, we had more customers that way.

WN: Was that system used in the Onishi Shōkai and the other ones?

MS: Yeah. They get the same system. But as I told you, the Filipino savings [enabled] us to carry the accounts longer than anybody else. We had the cash to pay the wholesaler. That made lot of difference.

WN: How much, on the average, would one Filipino actually put into your store as savings?

MS: I don't know how much, though. That was before my time. I only know my father told me about the savings. He say, if not for them, we go under.

That's why he said as far as payments to the wholesaler, I think Maui Shōkai had the best record. [We] had the cash to pay, although that wasn't [our] money, eh? (Laughs) That's why he said he could take that Those days, [if you pay within] thirty days, [you get] 2 percent off [discount] or thirty days, 5 percent off. Wholesalers had that kind of account. So, we can pay [within] thirty days, get the discount. Whereas if you don't have the cash, you have to wait thirty days and cannot get the discount. So, where you get for one dollar, we get for 5 percent less, our profit would be 5 percent more than you. That's the advantage you have.

So, he can pay 5 percent interest. I don't know, maybe he didn't pay 5 percent. Those days, maybe 3 percent, yeah?

WN: What was the percent interest that the bank used?

MS: I think 3 percent those days. Because when I worked in the savings and loan, we were paying 5 percent. So, before that was far cheaper. Savings and loan, 5, bank is 3. They have the differential anyway.

WN: Talking about the store itself--when your father had it--would lot of people drop into the store to buy things?

MS: No, walk-in is few. Of course, little bit, but not too much. Not like nowadays, you see all come into the store. Those days, you have to go out [and deliver]. If you don't go out, you won't get any business. Because plantation used to close about 4 o'clock, 4:30 [p.m.]. Look the shopping time. You don't have much. And how many had cars way back days?

WN: What about Kahului people?

MS: Kahului people, yeah, would come. But in Kahului, we still used to go and take order and deliver. I still remember I used to go Kahului more often than anybody else because it was near for me. We had pretty good column of customers, but most Filipinos, too.

WN: So, [some] Filipinos would walk in. And the system of credit was the same?

MS: Same. Only thing, Kahului is weekly payday. But weekly payday, they were more broke than the monthly-payday people.

WN: Weekly payday would mean like what kind of jobs?

MS: Stevedore. Most, stevedore [employees of Kahului Railroad Company]. They cannot save money weekly, because they knew they (were) going (to be paid) next week. So, they don't save. Like monthly pay, you have to hold onto your money till the following payday. That's thirty days. Nowadays and way back, different.

WN: Would you say a large percentage of your clientele was the plantation people?

MS: Oh, yeah. Ninety percent. And outside walk-in is few. Like fair time, we used to do big business. County fair.

WN: Oh, Maui County Fair [in Kahului].

MS: Maui County Fair. Those days, the admission was free, see? So, they would come out and eat. And then, we used to sell shoes-- sports shoes. Hat. That's the occasion to sell hat, shoes. Big event, those Maui County Fair. Those Filipinos want to get all dressed up, yeah? After they start charging admission, then our fair business was gone already. They don't come out. Until then, oh, we used to do big business.

WN: You mean, walk-in business?

MS: Yeah. Sell ice cream, fruits, sushi. Filipinos wore (everything) new. Naturally, they want to dress up. That's big occasion, eh? So, they buy everything new. Necktie, hey, we used to sell necktie, too. And shirt. (Laughs) Yeah, fair time was a big sales booster. But today, I think, not.

WN: How far away was this fair from your folks' store?

MS: Ours was the first store from the fairground. So, naturally, they would come to our place. Buy their sushi, fruits, ice cream, soda. Like Onishi was across the tracks, and that was about two hundred yards away yet. The fair is not like it used to be.

WN: Did your father advertise at all?

- MS: No. I don't think any store advertised, those days. Later on, when the supermarkets came--our time--then, we started to advertise, to compete. Noda [Yaichi Noda, another interviewee], us, Pete Matsuoka, about four--oh, Pukalani--get together and put one ad. Same price.
- WN: But before, how did the Filipinos know that this was the store to go to?
- MS: Salesmen, salesmen. If a new person come into the camp as a laborer, the salesman would go over. Trust that he's trustworthy. You don't know until the following month whether he is going to pay the bill. But, as I said, Visayan and Ilocano. You watch the customer. Ilocano, you can trust, see? But Visayan, you better go easy. All on the body, eh?
- WN: Solinap, did he deal with the Ilocanos . . .
- MS: Oh, that's his best customers. He knows which is good. Funny, yeah? Two Filipinos, but Visayan would go to the Ilocano more.
- WN: When you were growing up, did you have certain chores that you had to do inside the store? Any kind job?
- MS: No. Only go to help them deliver. Right after grammar school, I left for Honolulu, so I cannot do anything except when I come back (for the) summer. Then, I go help them deliver again.
- WN: Did he have people like salesclerks and so forth and people who swept the store?
- MS: Yeah. My sister. My mother. They swept the stores. My sister swept the store. The Filipinos, I think, they swept the store, too, when they had leisure time.
- WN: The salesmen?
- MS: Yeah. Because after new month, [they] only [go out] every day, little by little. New month is 50 percent of their sales already. The rest of the days is just going out [and making] contact, [getting for the customers] few things what they missed [during] new month. That old style. New month is a big thing.
- I think, every store had the big sale. All the Japanese stores was doing the same system. New month sale. One would give twenty, next give twenty. If he give nineteen, then we come down nineteen, too [i.e., extending new month privileges beginning on the nineteenth of the month instead of the twentieth]. (Laughs) Of course, your big customer, maybe he used to buy fifty dollars worth. He say, "Give me new month." Naturally, you got to give new month, one day early but.
- WN: So, if a customer came in on the nineteenth, they would ask if you

can give them new month?

MS: Yeah, if it's your good customer--the one that buy big one. You don't want to lose him, so you going to give. If not, he goes to a competitor, and he tell 'em, "Hey, give me new month."

WN: You said that you had new month sale? That means what? You'd put the prices down on certain items?

MS: No, same, same. No more special, those days. No such thing as special. Only thing, maybe, the other salesman would tell, "Eh, this is this much." Naturally, you have to come to that price. But no such thing as advertising, so naturally

WN: Your father's time, what were the hours of the store?

MS: Six to eight, I think. Six o'clock in the morning to 8 in the night. But when came to us [1940], little later, yeah? Seven o'clock [a.m.] and then, 6 o'clock [p.m.]. And they used to work Sunday, too. Then, our time, we start quitting Sunday. We didn't want to work Sunday. The old people never mind the time. They stay up whole day, whole night.

WN: They used to take orders and deliver on Sundays, too?

MS: No, no. Sundays, don't deliver. But when it came to new month, like this guy Solinap, he get so much order, we have to make the order [i.e., gather the merchandise] in the evening so he can start delivering early in the morning. If not, he cannot take order next day. Only delivery, yeah? Oh, he used to bring the big order in. New month. You take, maybe, get twenty Filipinos ordering twenty bag rice, that's two trip already. (Laughs)

WN: Okay, you told me some of the things that you folks sold before you took over. What else did you sell besides groceries, bicycle, and phonograph?

MS: I told you we sold shoes. Neckties, all

WN: Clothing?

MS: Clothing. And then, few drug items. Anything under the sun. You name it, we used to carry.

WN: So, how big was your store?

MS: You mean the floor space? Shee, how big Get this whole house. That's what? Thirteen

WN: Thirteen feet?

MS: No, more than that. This whole building. The length of the store This is what? I think, our yard--length. Our yard, from that to this.

WN: So, that's about . . .

MS: Fifty yard? Twenty-five . . .

WN: About forty?

MS: Yeah, about forty yards, maybe.

WN: Forty yards long?

MS: And then, deep. Deep up there, about, maybe twenty yards. Then, we had our home in the back. For the salesmen.

WN: Was there just one floor?

MS: One floor, yeah, store. But our residence, we had two story. Warehouse under, and sleeping quarter upstairs. One side was warehouse, sleeping quarter; one side was garage, sleeping quarter upstairs. Another side, warehouse, living quarter on the top.

WN: Your warehouse was . . .

MS: Ground floor. And then, the living quarter above the warehouse. [That way] you save building costs.

WN: Would you folks all eat together?

MS: On shifts. Somebody have to watch the store, yeah? (Laughs)

WN: But after you closed, you folks didn't all sit down and eat?

MS: No, no. We eat before closing. Eight o'clock [p.m.] closing, you can't wait till 8. Five o'clock, 6 o'clock, we eating. So, we eat first, and then, after we finish, we go back to the store. Then our parents go to eat. Then they come back. That's why [today] I eat fast. My wife tell me, "Hey, you eating too fast." That's the cause of it, see? Eat fast, go back and watch the store.

WN: Who kept the books in your store?

MS: My brother. The youngest brother. After he get through [working] with the bank, (he came) in to take care the books. But the billing--customer's billing--my sister used to make, and I used to make. But the posting, he does the posting. But you have to have your bills ready every day.

WN: What did you folks do with the delinquent bills?

MS: After one year, we used to give 'em to the collector. Those that left us. Maybe different camp. They might go different island. When our customers went to Lanai to work for the pineapple (company), we went there couple of times. Because, those days, lot of them shift to Lanai on the pineapple season. The plantation would let

'em go--off-season. I know couple times we went there, do the collection, and come back. Payday. Of course, payday time only.

WN: Would you go?

MS: I went couple times. Then in the end, I had my former shop teacher, personnel director at Lanai. So, I wrote to him, "This person, collected for us." They payroll deduction for us, so we didn't go after that. Filipinos single boys, so that's the only thing you have to watch. They can pack up next night and go. If family man, different. You cannot.

That's the risk you have to take when you're dealing with Filipinos. How many firms went into Filipino business, but they couldn't make it go. They all quit in the end. You have to have one guy like this Solinap, dedicated that he go there nighttime. If he can't see the guy, nighttime; he go in the morning.

WN: Did he have many enemies?

MS: No, that's the funny thing, though. I tell you, he had friends everywhere. Friends. So, my father used to give him free trip to Honolulu to see me play football every Thanksgiving Day.

Yeah, my father used to treat 'em just like a son. He know he's the one that made the store. So, all kind of benefit, he used to give. He give 'em free meal, lodging free, take 'em football, give 'em cigar. He didn't buy cigar. Our store used to supply him the cigar. Of course, he used the cigar lot of time, too. He used to work just like was his own store.

WN: When did he die?

MS: He died I think after about ten years after we took over, though. About 1950, I think.

WN: After you took over in 1940, was he still working for you?

MS: Yeah, yeah.

WN: Before you took over, what was the markup procedure in your store?

MS: About 30 percent, I would say.

WN: For everything?

MS: Most everything, yeah, except rice, maybe. Rice, they might charge one dollar half [\$1.50] for bag extra. That's all from the cost. They don't mark up percentage.

WN: Why not?

MS: Then the rice come too high. That's the competitive item. Rice

was the most competitive item. You mark your rice too high, then they [customers] think everything is too high. What they call, nowadays, loss leader. Those days, they don't have loss leaders, but they used to make rice cheaper.

WN: So, your most popular item was rice?

MS: Rice.

WN: Was the price of rice in all of those stores about the same?

MS: Yeah, you have to. You cannot be too high. In those days, rice was only three dollars.

WN: For 100-pound bag?

MS: Hundred pound bag. (Laughs) Yeah, I still remember the steamer strike. We used to ration rice. The government said five pound, I think, a person.

WN: Wait. What strike was this?

MS: The first Matson Steamship strike. No rice came in.

WN: Do you know when that was?

MS: I don't know.

WN: I better look that up. [The 1949 Longshoremen's Strike]

MS: Yeah. They rationed rice. The main item. I think was five pound to a person. You know Filipino eat that five pound in two days. After that, they didn't go to work. They eat the rice and that's all. They don't go to work.

WN: Was this in 1949?

MS: Around there. They didn't know how much to give. Gradually, they increased, then the Filipinos started to go back to work because they had enough. I think was fifteen pounds. I think the plantation asked the government to increase the ration because too many stayed home.

The second strike, one single boy, maybe, had five bag rice. Stack up the rice and then, the worm ate 'em up in the end. They learn from the first strike, see? Rice. That's why the second strike, they all went wild buying rice. You ask all these stores, they tell you. (Laughs)

WN: Next time, I want to talk about after you took over. Next time, when we talk, I want to see if there were changes between the time you worked and the time your father . . .

MS: Not too much. My brother was the manager. He came from the old school. (Laughs) So, we didn't change. I wanted to change to cash and carry. There's not much changes. Hardly anything to talk about. (Laughs)

WN: Okay. Going back a little bit, besides the banking services that your father had, were there any other kind of services, or did he do anything else for the Filipinos besides the banking?

MS: No, no, no. That's the only thing he did separate from the grocery store. I don't know what's the total amount he had, but he said was quite a sum. Those days, \$10,000 is big money. Nowadays, it's small. One individual can get \$10,000, but those days, if you get \$10,000 savings from all the people, that's quite a sum. I don't think anybody had more than \$1,000. Must be couple hundred [\$200] or \$500 at the most, yeah? Because only a short time.

WN: In 1937, I think you were in Japan at that time, but there was a Filipino strike?

MS: Yeah, they had one. Manla--not Manlapit.

WN: Fagel?

MS: No, not Fagel.

WN: Antonio Fagel?

MS: Not that name.

WN: No?

MS: No. Forgot already. That's the first strike, anyway. My Solinap, he used to take the Filipinos to work.

WN: During the strike?

MS: Yeah. (Laughs) Make 'em go to work. You know, the first strike. At the start, he was helping them go to work. Of course, in the end, he couldn't go out. But at the start, he used to put on his pickup truck, take 'em out in the field.

WN: Even if they didn't want to go work?

MS: I don't know if they didn't want to go to work or not, but he went out couple times, I know. But, afterwards, cannot because the Filipinos went after him, I think. See, I know they used Right where Hata is now. You know where the Hata Grocery Store is? Plantation used to dump all of them there. Get out from the camp.

WN: On the beach, huh?

MS: Yeah, on the beach, they were there.

WN: Did your father . . .

MS: We gave credit.

WN: Did he make it little more easier?

MS: No, the markup same. No, same. But that didn't last too long. That second one, when that union organized . . .

WN: Oh, yeah. Nineteen forty-six [1946].

MS: . . . that's the long one.

WN: But the one in 1937 was only Filipinos? Did your father . . .

MS: Filipinos. Pablo. No, not Pablo his name was.

WN: I read that it was Antonio Fagel.

MS: Not Fagel. No. Maybe Fagel, no. Altogether different.

WN: Anyway, did he donate at all? Did he donate any food to the strikers?

MS: I think so. Most strike, we donated, though. Because usually, the customer would come. All the union striked, every one, they used to come, too. I know that Filipino strike, my father said they had to give, maybe, couple bag rice, yeah? Even you--if you had a good customer--if he comes to you, you can't say no.

Although we owned the (building, we) leased the land, so we used to tell 'em, "Don't publicize anything." Because we're on plantation land. You cannot give to the strikers. But the strikers, that's the first place they come. To the store. The union strike, we almost go under. Too long we gave credit. But luckily, that ended in, I think, about three months, yeah? That was strike.

WN: Okay. Next time, let's talk about when the time you and your brothers started the business in 1940.

MS: Not much to talk about.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 7-40-2-80

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Masakazu Shimoda (MS)

February 29, 1980

Wailuku, Maui

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Masakazu Shimoda. Today is February 29, 1980, and we're at his home in Wailuku, Maui.

Okay, let's see, 1940, your father passed on the business to the three of you?

MS: Uh huh [yes].

WN: And he went to Japan? How did you folks decide among yourselves--the three of you--who was going to do what?

MS: We divided equally--one-third each.

WN: Oh, the shares?

MS: Shares.

WN: Yeah. But as far as the jobs are concerned?

MS: My older brother was the manager. I was the salesman and bookkeeper. My younger brother was the auditor.

WN: Oh, so you were the bookkeeper?

MS: Uh huh [yes]. And my sister. She did the billing.

WN: So, your sister got any share of the store?

MS: No. Japanese style. Boys get everything, girls get nothing.

WN: Did she put up any kind of a squawk?

MS: No, no. We hired her at the store. We hired her husband at the store after Ikeda Store [in Kahului] closed.

WN: Oh, the husband was working for . . .

MS: For Ikeda Store. So when Ikeda Store closed we hired her and the husband.

WN: So, as far as your job was concerned, you said you were salesman and bookkeeper. What do you mean by "salesman"?

MS: I go out in the camp--deliver, take order.

WN: Your father's time, you folks had about five or six salesmen, huh? Filipino.

MS: Uh huh [yes]. When the war broke up, we didn't have any Filipino salesmen then already. They left for government jobs.

WN: How come they left?

MS: Bigger pay.

WN: About how much bigger was it? I mean, plenty? Big difference?

MS: Oh, lot of difference. Oh yeah. Retail stores are the cheapest paying job.

WN: And this Mr. Solinap?

MS: Oh, he was dead already. I don't know what year though.

WN: So, then, after the Filipinos left for the defense job, how many salesmen had left?

MS: Was my brother-in-law, Mr. Nako, and myself.

WN: So, three. So you folks cut down on your sales then or what?

MS: No, I don't think. We increased. We had more Portuguese then, yeah? Oh, of course, majority was Japanese, but we had lot of Portuguese customers afterwards.

WN: You mean walk-in kind?

MS: No. I used to go to Portuguese family, most. Besides the Filipinos.

WN: So, all the customers that you folks had--the Filipino customers that you had before the war--you folks retained them?

MS: We lost some because many single boys left for defense jobs. But then--I told you--we made up with the Portuguese family then.

WN: What made you decide to go to the Portuguese families?

MS: I wonder what made me decide that? Most of them were [former] Camp 5 Store customers [before Maui Shōkai bought out Camp 5 Store]. Eventually,

I got into one Portuguese family, and that Portuguese family tell the next person. That's how I increased. Lot of Portuguese.

WN: This is what? Going out by Spanish B Camp?

MS: Spanish B Camp, yeah. Alabama Camp. Portuguese have big families, so you can take ten Filipino [bachelors] to one Portuguese family. So, I think we increased more than what my father's time, yeah?

WN: You actually went to less houses, then, after the war . . .

MS: Yeah, uh huh.

WN: After the war, you didn't have any Filipino salesmen, then?

MS: No.

WN: Did you already know the Filipino people?

MS: Oh, yeah. Continue. More family Filipinos than single boys.

WN: What about your brother who was the manager? Did he do any kind of salesman's work?

MS: No, just manager. You see we had that--the Filipino store that went broke--we bought that out. Then, we had two stores. So, he was managing two.

WN: The Filipino store that went broke, that was Maui Filipino Store?

MS: Something like that, the name.

WN: Where was that? Next to your store?

MS: I don't call it "next." Two stores away. Was only about twenty-five yards away.

WN: When did it come up?

MS: Before the war [1929]. I think they lasted only about two years or three years. [It lasted six years, from 1929-1936. See Leodegario Polo interview in these volumes].

WN: How did you folks feel when they opened?

MS: No, we didn't lose anything, so we didn't worry. Filipinos, you have good salesmen, they stick with you.

WN: But then, didn't they have Filipino salesmen that would go out?

MS: Oh, yes. They had. (Chuckles) The manager was one of our [former] salesmen. He left [and became] the manager [of Maui] Filipino Store.

WN: So, he went out on his own, then?

MS: Uh huh [yes].

WN: Do you know why they had to close?

MS: Overextend credit. (Pause) You undercapitalize, you cannot give credit because you have to wait thirty to sixty days before you get the money. In the meantime, you have to pay the wholesaler. If you can't collect, you can't pay the wholesaler. Naturally, the wholesaler cut you out. Then, you have to buy [wholesale goods with] cash, and [if] you give credit [to customers], you won't have any cash left.

WN: So, that's what happened? They had to pay the wholesaler cash?

MS: In the end, yeah.

WN: Is that how lot of stores went out of business?

MS: Overextend. That's why, eventually, it [stores in general] came to cash and carry in the end. Before the supermarket came was cash and carry.

WN: What was cash and carry?

MS: Something like supermarket, but we used to call it cash-and-carry stores.

WN: You mean, you're talking about the Filipino store?

MS: No, all, in general. They don't give credit. You go in there; you buy the goods, pay cash, and take it home. Same like supermarkets now. Those days, they used to call it cash and carry.

WN: What about Maui Shōkai? Did you folks ever go to cash and carry?

MS: No, never. I think we closed the store first on credit basis. But credit stores, after five years, they all stand all right. You have the revolving fund already by then.

WN: What is that? Revolving fund?

MS: You have extra cash already, you see? So, you can give credit and wait for the pay. If you don't have enough capital, you cannot last, because you have to charge [i.e., give credit]; but in the meantime, in thirty days, you have to pay the wholesaler. If your customers don't pay you, you don't have enough cash the following month. So, most of them--within five years if you don't make a go--they go bankrupt.

WN: So, in the first five years, what do you have to do?

MS: Get enough capital. Get enough capital to pay the wholesaler.

WN: In those days, since everything was credit . . .

MS: But wholesalers, thirty days, you have to pay. In the meantime, you give credit for forty-five days, sixty days. If you had \$1,000 the first month, you need another \$1,000 to pay the wholesaler. In the meantime, you don't collect the first \$1,000. If everybody pays, it's not too bad, but if some don't pay, you don't have enough to pay the third month already. So, if you're undercapitalized, you cannot make a go [giving] credit.

WN: Would you say that the solution to that kind of stuff would be cash and carry?

MS: Cash and carry. Today, there's hardly any store give credit, I think.

WN: After you folks took over, 1940, did you ever think about cash and carry?

MS: We thought [about it] couple times, but we didn't go into it. There's one store that went into it, though. Ooka's. Ooka, they went into cash and carry. The rest of the Japanese stores, all credit. So, eventually, all closed. (Laughs)

WN: Whose idea was it to not go into cash and carry?

MS: The manager. (Chuckles)

WN: Why do you suppose that the Japanese stores stayed on credit?

MS: Hard to broke the tradition, yeah? As long as one store will give credit, naturally, if you go cash and carry, the customer will run away to the credit store. Like Ooka didn't go to the [plantation] camp. That's the difference.

WN: Oh, I see. Ooka's clientele was Kahului?

MS: Kahului. Yeah, he was the first to go in cash and carry.

WN: Do you know about when he started doing that?

MS: I don't know.

WN: Was it before the war?

MS: Before the war. The father was working for Kahului [HC&S] Store. So, he went into cash and carry store. Easy for him. He had no credit customers. Just open cash and carry store. Whereas, others, they still went out in the camp, give credit. [It was] hard to tell, "I cut your credit out. I'm cash and carry." Hard to do

that. If everybody went broke giving credit, maybe they quit credit store, but nobody went broke except for that Filipino store.

WN: Another competition was probably the plantation stores, huh?

MS: Well, everybody. Japanese stores, everyone, with the plantation store, all compete each other.

WN: Maui Shōkai, they had the new month order, eh? Did they ever had times when you folks made the new month order early, like start on the nineteenth or eighteenth?

MS: Oh, yeah. One, two days ahead. Especially your good customers.

WN: Would the plantation get mad if you folks did that?

MS: Yeah. You not supposed to. But then, the customers don't say, too.

WN: How would the plantation tell you folks?

MS: I don't know. All agree, I think. They start. They the leaders--plantation stores are the leaders. So, we all follow. But then, the big customer say, "Give me one day ahead," well, you have to give, on the sly.

WN: The wholesaling, did you folks get stuff from Kahului HC&S?

MS: Kahului Store. Yeah. Then, there was Maui Dry Goods, too. We got from both of them.

WN: This was after you took over? Anybody else you folks dealt with?

MS: American Factors, Theo H. Davies, Waldron. And the Japanese stores--Y. Hata, Sumida, Fuji Shōten. Then, we used to get from the Mainland, direct. Yeah, United Grocers.

WN: How did you make the initial contact with United Grocers?

MS: Through magazines. You see the wholesaler's name, and then you write to them.

WN: United Grocers would send you like what kind of stuff?

MS: Oh, all grocery lines. Whatever we want.

WN: What were the advantages of going to the Mainland wholesaler?

MS: Little cheaper, because you don't have the between man.

WN: What about the payment? Was it easier?

MS: No, through the Mainland, you have to pay cash on delivery.

WN: So, if you were just starting out, it would be hard to deal with Mainland?

MS: Especially if you have to give credit to your customers, yeah.

WN: So, when you folks took over, did you folks agree to everything, or were there any kind of quarrels between you three?

MS: Japanese style. The older brother is the boss. What he says goes.

WN: What about the wives? Did they help at all?

MS: No, the wives are out. Later on, yeah, my wife came into it when we bought Haliimaile Store, and we took Camp 5 Store.

WN: When did you folks buy the Haliimaile Store?

MS: Oh, about (twenty-five) years ago, I think.

WN: And the Camp 5 Store, too?

MS: Same time.

WN: So, (1956), is that about when these two stores were closed by the plantation?

MS: Plantation didn't close. They gave up the stores. They sold to us. Haliimaile was owned by another Japanese. Maui Pine [Maui Pineapple Company] sold the plantation store to Nakamura Fish Market in Paia.

WN: So, Haliimaile, they [plantation] didn't sell directly to you, then?

MS: No, no. We bought from Nakamura Fish Market--okayd by Maui Pine, of course, because Maui Pine owned that store. We just leased that.

WN: What about the Camp 5 Store? Was that owned by somebody else before?

MS: Plantation. We bought from the plantation store [system].

WN: The plantation, did they offer it to you to buy, or did they offer it to other people?

MS: To us. Because they [Alexander & Baldwin] wanted to close our Kahului store. It [the area] became a shopping center. Our place was closed down--broken down. So, they gave us the chance to buy Camp 5 Store. In the meantime, Nakamura Fish Market wanted to give up that Haliimaile Store. So, we bought two side. My older brother went to Camp 5 Store, I went to Haliimaile Store. My wife went with me. We hired somebody from Haliimaile.

WN: When A&B decided to build the Kahului Shopping Center, they told you folks that you had to move out?

MS: Uh huh [yes]. They offered us Camp 5 Store.

WN: So, the Kahului Shopping Center was built in 1951? Is that when Maui Shōkai was torn down?

MS: About five years or so afterward. They started from They broke down Noda Fish Market, Onishi . . . [This section of stores was the first to be demolished. Maui Shōkai was one of the last stores to be demolished.]

WN: This is on Kaahumanu--Main Street?

MS: Yeah, Main Street. They broke down, and then they moved. They gave Ah Fook, Noda Fish Market [space in Kahului Shopping Center]. Our side was the last to be broken down [Puunene Avenue]. So, took about five years, I think.

WN: So, Maui Shōkai actually closed about 1956?

MS: Nineteen fifty-six [1956], around there, maybe.

WN: Did they offer you a chance to go into the Kahului Shopping Center?

MS: They promised us at the start. [As] part of developing the shopping center in Kahului, they promised every merchant doing business in Kahului [that] they'll have a place in the shopping center. Being the last place to broke down, they changed their mind in the end. Then, they promised us a [space in a] small shopping district near Lihikai School.

WN: Lihikai School in Kahului?

MS: Yeah, Kahului. They have a big, empty lot. They were going to make it into small district stores, but the manager of that development, I think, resigned or he got fired. I don't know which. He left. So, whatever he said, they cancelled everything. We didn't have any chance of going in already. I think they changed the plan.

WN: This was A&B? That new shopping center?

MS: Oh, they called the Kahului merchants before they developed the shopping center. They had a big meeting. They told everybody don't worry, they'll give everybody a chance to be in that shopping center. So, we were waiting, too, like everybody else. Then, the plans changed.

WN: Do you know why the plans changed?

MS: I don't know.

FS [MS's wife]: Management, I think, yeah?

MS: Yeah.

WN: Oh, a change in management.

FS: You see, the trouble is, with Oriental people--most of them [merchants] were Oriental--they took them by their word, you know. They didn't do it in black and white [i.e., written contract]--you know, have a lawyer handle things. That was the only thing. If they had it in black and white . . .

MS: Oh, they made lot of shibai. They came to our store, take the measurement--how big the store is. They want to give us about the same size store in the [shopping] district. (Chuckles) So, we waited, we waited. But there's nothing in black in white, so we can't do anything. They tell you to move, you have to move.

WN: So, you folks expected to actually move into Kahului Shopping Center?

MS: Yeah, that's right. Everybody.

WN: So, what other merchants were affected by the change in plans besides you folks?

MS: Kobayashi Store. Japanese Mercantile. Onishi.

WN: So, then, when you folks found out that you weren't going to go into Kahului Shopping Center, they offered you folks . . .

MS: Camp 5 Store [in Puunene]. In the meantime, Nakamura Fish Market wanted to give up Haliimaile Store. But that was the best thing they did, though. Haliimaile was a good place. They built a post office for us. So, when you have a post office, you draw a lot of customers. Maybe that's the best thing we did--move out [from Kahului]. We can retire. If we [were located in] a shopping center, I think we can't retire. (Laughs)

WN: So, the shops that actually ended up in the Kahului Shopping Center, like Noda, and Toda, and Ah Fook's . . .

FS: They were on the front [Main] street. They were on the other street.

WN: . . . how did they manage to get in?

FS: You see, they were on the main street. You know, that Kaahumanu [Avenue]. You know where the Burger King is? Well, they were on that stretch, you see, coming from Lono Avenue. You know where Lono Avenue is, by that Maui Palms Hotel? Well, they were on that stretch. The stores were on this side, and Noda was on that side

where Hukilau Hotel is [i.e., ocean side]. So, they wanted to get them off there, because those hotels and things were coming up. So, they moved them over. They gave Noda that place [in Kahului Shopping Center].

MS: They were across the track, yeah?

FS: Yeah. They wanted to dig up the track . . .

MS: The hotel site is across the track.

FS: Our store happened to be--this is the main street--our store happened on this side.

WN: Puunene Avenue?

FS: Yeah, Puunene Avenue, where Pizza Hut is? We were across from there.

WN: That's why you folks were one of the . . .

MS: Last. That's the last.

FS: Yeah. Because we didn't have a chance to get into the shopping center, because they gave Ah Fook's first and Noda, they told us if we'd like to have a family store. We said, "Oh, sure." So, [we were] going into Lihikai [School] by KMVI [radio station]. Just before you come to the school, there's a big site. It's still empty there. They said they wouldn't sell that parcel. That was supposed to be the store. Well, it's still empty. Somebody was saying they're going to sell that place. But they didn't. You see, because the manager who made the agreement was fired, or he left, or something. So, this new guy took over.

WN: When you folks moved to Haliimaile, you said business was good. Did you folks sell the same kind of things there?

MS: That's right. Except we started selling fish, meat, which we didn't sell at old Maui Shōkai.

FS: And we had dry goods.

WN: How did you get the fish and meat?

MS: Nakamura Fish Market. That old man was nice. He wanted us to succeed, so he brought the fish up.

FS: From Paia, yeah? He used to come and help us get started, because we didn't know the ropes. He was really nice.

WN: You were watching the Haliimaile Store. How about the Camp 5 Store?

MS: My brother, with my sister. Then, they had my brother-in-law. Then, they had Mr. Nako. Then, they had . . .

FS: Working ladies.

MS: Two working ladies.

WN: Did you buy the Camp 5 Store, or did they just give it to you folks?

MS: We have to buy the merchandise.

WN: Do you remember how much?

MS: Just for the merchandise. The building was rental. We paid, I think, \$150 a month, rent. Haliimaile, we paid \$75 rent. Very cheap.

WN: Was business better or worse there?

MS: Better. Because we went to a new place, we had our old customers, which we gave credit. The new ones [had to pay] cash. So, we had 50 percent cash [customers] and 50 percent credit [customers]. We didn't have that much cash business [previously].

WN: These were like people who lived around there?

MS: Oh, yeah.

WN: How about the Camp 5 Store? Was that good, too? Better?

MS: Oh, yeah. Better. As I said, [with the] new people, [it was] all cash and carry. That's additional income. We didn't lose our credit customers, because we gave credit from Camp 5 Store. Haliimaile, we went to a new place, but Maui Pine gave us payroll deduction. It's just like cash. In the end, we knew who's who. Then, when payroll deduction was cancelled, we gave them credit.

WN: Can you explain that payroll deduction again?

MS: Payroll deduction is you give credit, and when it's payday, the plantation deduct the credit.

WN: Oh, the plantation did that for you folks?

MS: Yeah, in Haliimaile. The credit accounts we gave, we gave the list to them [at the] end of the month. Then, payday, they deduct all that and give us one lump sum. You don't get any loss. If anybody got fired, they telephone us. "Hey, this person is fired as of today. How much they owe you?" So, we tell 'em how much. They deduct that much and give him the rest. Was easy.

WN: You folks didn't have to worry about giving credit?

MS: Uh uh [no]. When the union came in, then payroll deduction [was eliminated]. The union didn't like that. But by then, we knew who's who. It's not like when you go to a new place and you don't know anybody. You get stuck. Any store that open new business, it's the bad eggs that would come ask for credit. That, you have to know when you open new business. Because they cannot get credit from another store, they would try you. Like when we went to Haliimaile, we didn't know anybody. But through payroll deduction, we knew who's good, who's not.

WN: How long did the payroll deduction last?

MS: About five years, I think.

WN: Up until the union came in, that's when you folks had the

MS: Payroll deduction.

WN: So, union came in in 1946, huh?

MS: Maui Pine wasn't unionized until later on [1947]. I'm talking only about Maui Pine. Union came in when we (went to) Camp 5 already.

WN: So, Camp 5 . . .

MS: No payroll deduction, no.

WN: So, did they have a more difficult time--your brother?

MS: No, we had our old customers. The new ones, we didn't give credit. All cash. That's why, whatever cash we got, it's extra income. We didn't lose our old customers because we did delivery, and most of our customers were in Puunene.

WN: So, Camp 5, you retained the old customers, and you took cash for the new ones. Haliimaile, you . . .

MS: All credit. Payroll deduction. That's why was much better than staying in Kahului.

WN: How did the rent differ between the Kahului rent, and the Haliimaile and Camp 5 rent?

MS: Kahului was just for the land, we have to pay. So, the land lease was cheap, not too much, because the building belonged to us. Whereas in Camp 5, the building belonged to the plantation. Haliimaile, the building belonged to the As far as rent, it's cheap because the building wasn't for us. Haliimaile, we paid only seventy-five dollars for that big building. You can't rent that [kind of place] for \$500 [today]. See, Maui Pine wanted a store in the village for the plantation people. If there weren't any store, they had to go out to Makawao, maybe three miles away,

or come down to Kahului, that was fifteen miles. So, they [Maui Pine] helped us a lot in Haliimaile. They made a post office for us, and the government paid us \$250 a month. And we were paying Maui Pine \$75 rent.

WN: Who ran the post office?

MS: I ran the post office. My wife assisted.

FS: Assisted in everything. We had a working day that was tough, you know. [We] really worked.

WN: When you folks had to move to Camp 5 Store and Haliimaile, did you folks ever feel that the camps were closing down, so maybe the future might be . . .

MS: That time when we moved, they didn't close yet. The Dream City wasn't built yet. They were telling us maybe ten years from that day we bought--maybe ten years from then--they might be breaking down the houses. So, we didn't worry. In fact until we closed, hardly any customers left for Dream City yet.

WN: Oh, when did you folks close?

MS: About seven years ago, I think.

WN: Nineteen seventy-three [1973]?

MS: Nineteen seventy-three [1973]. Around there, I think--1970 or 1973.

WN: But, you know, Dream City started coming up about 1950? You folks didn't notice any decline in . . .

MS: No, no, no. And then, being a credit store, our salesmen go to Dream City, take the order, too. So, we didn't lose any. Even when they moved, the salesmen would go over, take their order every month.

WN: So, was like the opposite, then?

MS: We didn't worry because the rent was cheap.

WN: When you folks were thinking about moving into the Kahului Shopping Center, how much did you think you folks would have to be paying for rent?

MS: We didn't have any idea. By percent. They had a minimum rent--I think, \$500. And whatever sales--I think maybe \$50,000 or above--you have to pay so much percent.

WN: What about the other stores that were affected by this change in decision? What did they do?

- MS: Kobayashi--war broke out, so they closed [because of the Alien Properties Custody Act]. Ikeda . . .
- FS: He went back to Japan.
- WN: Because of the war?
- MS: Just before the war. Then, Onishi . . .
- FS: Closed.
- MS: Yeah, JM--Japanese Mercantile--closed.
- WN: Did they all close about the same time?
- MS: Yeah, about the same time.
- WN: So, what do you think it was about Maui Shōkai that kept on going?
- MS: Because they gave us the Camp 5 Store. We thought we [would] get only Camp 5. Then, Haliimaile offered us. So, we had two stores, which made it better. That's additional income from Haliimaile. But Camp 5 was good because we had our old customers plus our new cash-and-carry customers.
- WN: Did you folks keep calling it Camp 5 Store or Maui Shōkai?
- MS: Camp 5 Store. Well, our building is Maui Shōkai.
- WN: When you folks took over Camp 5 Store, did you folks change the merchandise at all?
- MS: No, same thing. Carry the same line, except Camp 5 Store had meat. So, we ran a butcher shop there. That's the only difference. And then, once in awhile the fishermen come in, so we sold some fresh fish. Well, we sold fresh vegetables, too, which we didn't sell at Maui Shōkai, Kahului.
- WN: Where you got the fresh vegetables from?
- MS: Exchange--those farmer's exchange. Because Camp 5 Store was selling fresh vegetables. Like Haliimaile Store was selling fresh vegetables, so, naturally, we have to keep up the same grocery items there. I think that's the only difference from the old Maui Shōkai, Kahului.
- WN: Did you have to put in any kind of new equipment or anything like that?
- MS: No, no. They sold the store as it is.
- WN: When you went out to deliver to Dream City, these were your old customers, too?

MS: Yeah. Those that moved to Dream City.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, we're just going over the dates. Kahului Shopping Center opened about 1951, so you folks stayed [in Kahului] until 1956.

MS: About five years.

WN: Then, you moved to Haliimaile Store in about 1956, and Camp 5 Store. So, in 1973, you folks sold the Camp 5 Store to . . .

MS: Camp 5 and Haliimaile Store to Jack and Agnes. Forgot his last name already. Mrs. Shinyama.

FS: His name was Jack Edwards. Jack Edwards and his wife--Mr. and Mrs. Edwards.

MS: Jack Edwards, we sold to.

WN: So, 1973, you folks sold, then. Why did you decide to sell?

MS: Reach my retirement age. My sister, retirement age. My brother-in-law, retirement age. My brother retired . . .

FS: Two years before that.

MS: Yeah. And we had a buyer, so, naturally, we sold.

WN: Did you ever want to pass it on to your kids or anything like that?

MS: Nobody wanted to run the store. They didn't like the long hours.

WN: But, in 1973 when it closed, was business good?

MS: That's why they [the new buyers] bought the store. We showed [them] our books--how much we were selling, how much cash was coming in.

WN: So, at Haliimaile Store, volume of sales in one day, would you say, how much?

MS: For the month, about \$20,000. Camp 5 had about \$30,000.

WN: For the month. When you folks were at Kahului just before you moved to Haliimaile, about what was the volume of sales?

MS: I don't remember. Was less than that.

WN: Was it way less?

MS: Maybe 25 percent less.

WN: Maui Shōkai was the last of the big five [Kahului Japanese stores] to actually close, yeah?

MS: That's right. The last of the Kahului Japanese stores. We were the last.

WN: As you look back, Mr. Shimoda, what would you say was the main reason why you folks were able to last until 1973?

MS: Because we moved to Camp 5 and Haliimaile. If we had to start another place, I think we won't last. Ready-made store. And our customers were all in Puunene. That made lot of difference.

WN: If you folks did go into Kahului Shopping Center--this is just speculating--what do you think . . .

MS: I think we would have made good. I see everybody made good, so we would make.

WN: You think you would still be working today?

MS: Naturally, (laughs) naturally. When you have a big investment, you can't retire that early. Whereas when we [bought the] plantation stores, we didn't have to invest anything, except only for the merchandise. And we had the merchandise, so there wasn't any heavy investment. When you have big capital in, it's something else.

WN: As you look back, you have any last thoughts or regrets?

MS: No regrets. You can't beat retirement. You take Ah Fook, they had chance to move to that Maui Mall, but they have to put in about million dollars. So, they have the old place [in Kahului Shopping Center]. They have, I think, three or four years more to go [on the lease]. And I wonder if they are going to keep on going when the lease is over.

WN: So, as you look at the stores today and you compare it to how the stores were way back, what are the differences?

MS: Greatest difference is no credit. Everything is cash [today], so it's much easier to make a go.

WN: Today, it's easier?

MS: Easier. As long as you don't have too much overhead. When you have credit, that's something else because you have to watch your amount you give to each person. (If) they can't pay you, you have to cut their credit. Today, no such thing. If you sell, you [can always] buy [more] merchandise. [And even] if you don't sell, the merchandise is still there. Whereas credit, merchandise is sold,

so you have to replace that. And that person doesn't pay you, you can't buy merchandise again. I think it's easier today than our time. You notice, not one failing--Maui Mall, the old Kahului Shopping Center. All made a go because the people come in.

FS: And they have to pay cash.

WN: Cash and carry. Okay, well, thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

**STORES and
STOREKEEPERS of
Paia & Puunene, Maui**

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**Ethnic Studies Program
University of Hawaii, Manoa**

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